

Exploring the Myths of Cross-Cultural Marriages in India: A Sociological Study

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Abstract

Cross-cultural marriages have become increasingly visible in contemporary India due to rapid urbanization, higher education, migration, globalization, and expanding intercultural interaction. Despite these developments, several myths continue to influence public perceptions regarding such marriages. These myths often relate to marital instability, cultural erosion, parental opposition, religious conflict, social isolation, and identity formation among children. The present study, entitled "**Exploring the Myths of Cross-Cultural Marriages in India**," examines the prevalence and acceptance of these myths among residents of Varanasi district, Uttar Pradesh, from a sociological perspective. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Primary data were collected from **50 respondents** selected through simple random sampling from selected localities of Varanasi district. A structured questionnaire consisting of ten statements representing commonly prevailing myths regarding cross-cultural marriages was developed using a five-point Likert scale. Data were analysed using frequency, percentage, composite scores, and descriptive statistical techniques.

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents rejected most traditional myths associated with cross-cultural marriages. More than half of the respondents disagreed with statements suggesting that cross-cultural marriages inevitably result in divorce, destroy family traditions, create identity confusion among children, weaken Indian culture, or lead to permanent social isolation. The composite analysis further revealed that only a small proportion of respondents exhibited high acceptance of myths, while the majority demonstrated low or moderate acceptance. The findings suggest that education, increased intercultural interaction, constitutional awareness, and modernization have contributed to more rational and inclusive attitudes toward cross-cultural marriages. The study concludes that although traditional beliefs continue to influence certain sections of society, myths surrounding cross-cultural marriages are gradually declining. Promoting social awareness, intercultural dialogue, and value-based education can further reduce misconceptions and strengthen social acceptance of cultural diversity within marriage. The findings contribute to the sociological understanding of family change, cultural pluralism, and modernization in contemporary Indian society.

Keywords: Cross-cultural marriages, Myths, Sociology, Cultural diversity, Marriage attitudes, Social change, Varanasi.

I. Background of the Study

Marriage has always been regarded as one of the most important social institutions in India. It is not merely a union between two individuals but a relationship that connects families, kinship networks, cultural traditions, and social identities. Traditionally, Indian marriages have been guided by principles of endogamy, where individuals are expected to marry within the same caste, religion, language, region, or ethnic community. These norms have historically been considered essential for preserving cultural continuity, family honour, religious practices, and community identity. India is one of the most culturally diverse nations in the world. The country is home to thousands of castes, hundreds of linguistic communities, multiple religions, ethnic groups, and regional cultures. While this diversity has enriched Indian civilization, it has also created social boundaries that influence marriage choices. Cross-cultural marriages—those involving partners from different caste, religion, language, ethnicity, region, or cultural backgrounds—challenge these traditional boundaries. As a result, they often become subjects of social debate, misunderstanding, and misconceptions.

The twenty-first century has witnessed rapid social transformation in India due to education, urbanization, industrialization, migration, globalization, technological advancement, and digital communication. Educational institutions, workplaces, social networking platforms, and increased geographical mobility have significantly expanded opportunities for intercultural interaction. Consequently, cross-cultural marriages are becoming increasingly visible, particularly among educated and urban populations. Despite these developments, many myths continue to surround cross-cultural marriages. These myths are deeply rooted in historical traditions,

cultural beliefs, religious interpretations, family expectations, and societal stereotypes. Such misconceptions frequently influence public opinion, parental decisions, and even governmental and institutional responses toward intercultural unions. In many cases, these myths discourage individuals from exercising their constitutional right to choose their life partners freely. Sociology recognizes myths not as factual realities but as socially constructed beliefs that persist because they are transmitted through generations and reinforced by social institutions such as family, religion, media, and community organizations. These myths often influence behaviour regardless of whether they are supported by empirical evidence. The present study seeks to explore these myths from a sociological perspective by examining how they shape people's beliefs and attitudes toward cross-cultural marriages in India.

1.2 Concept of Cross-Cultural Marriage

Cross-cultural marriage refers to a marital relationship between individuals belonging to different cultural backgrounds. Cultural differences may include variations in religion, caste, language, ethnicity, regional identity, customs, traditions, food habits, dress patterns, values, and social practices. Cross-cultural marriages include:

- Inter-caste marriages
- Inter-religious marriages
- Inter-linguistic marriages
- Inter-regional marriages
- Inter-ethnic marriages
- Marriages between different tribal and non-tribal communities

Such marriages facilitate cultural exchange and mutual understanding while also requiring couples to negotiate differences in customs, traditions, religious practices, family expectations, and communication styles.

1.3 Understanding Myths in Sociology

In sociology, myths are socially accepted beliefs that are widely circulated and accepted without sufficient empirical verification. Myths often arise from collective experiences, historical traditions, religious narratives, cultural practices, stereotypes, and social prejudices. Unlike scientific facts, myths are sustained through continuous socialization. Families, peer groups, educational institutions, religious organizations, and media often reinforce these beliefs, making them appear natural and unquestionable. Regarding marriage, myths significantly influence partner selection, family approval, gender expectations, and community acceptance. Many individuals develop opinions about cross-cultural marriages based not on personal experience but on inherited social beliefs. Therefore, studying these myths enables sociologists to distinguish between socially constructed assumptions and contemporary social realities.

1.4 Common Myths Regarding Cross-Cultural Marriages in India

The present study proposes to examine the following **ten widely prevalent myths** that continue to influence public opinion regarding cross-cultural marriages in India.

Myth 1: Cross-Cultural Marriages Always End in Divorce

A common belief suggests that cultural differences inevitably create conflict, resulting in unstable marriages and high divorce rates. However, empirical research indicates that marital success depends more on communication, compatibility, emotional maturity, and mutual respect than cultural similarity.

Myth 2: Cross-Cultural Marriages Destroy Family Traditions

Many families believe that marrying outside one's culture results in the loss of customs, rituals, language, and cultural identity. In reality, numerous intercultural families successfully preserve and celebrate traditions from both cultural backgrounds.

Myth 3: Children Born in Cross-Cultural Marriages Experience Identity Confusion

Another widespread misconception is that children raised in intercultural families become confused about their religion, language, or cultural identity. Contemporary research suggests that many such children develop multicultural competence, broader perspectives, and greater adaptability.

Myth 4: Cross-Cultural Marriages are Socially Unacceptable

Although social resistance exists in some communities, acceptance has increased considerably in urban India due to education, constitutional awareness, and changing social values.

Myth 5: Religious Differences Always Lead to Marital Conflict

It is commonly believed that partners from different religions cannot maintain harmonious relationships because of conflicting beliefs and rituals. However, successful intercultural marriages often develop shared values through dialogue, mutual respect, and accommodation.

Myth 6: Cross-Cultural Marriages Weaken Indian Culture

Some people argue that intercultural marriages threaten cultural preservation. Sociologists, however, view cultural exchange as an important source of cultural enrichment rather than cultural decline.

Myth 7: Parents Always Oppose Cross-Cultural Marriages

Although parental opposition remains an important issue, increasing numbers of families now support intercultural marriages when partners are educated, economically stable, and emotionally compatible.

Myth 8: Cultural Similarity Guarantees a Successful Marriage

Many people assume that marrying within the same caste, religion, or community automatically ensures marital happiness. Research consistently demonstrates that communication, trust, respect, and emotional compatibility are much stronger predictors of marital success.

Myth 9: Cross-Cultural Couples Face Lifelong Social Isolation

While some couples initially experience social resistance, many gradually receive acceptance from families, friends, workplaces, and communities, especially in urban and educated settings.

Myth 10: Cross-Cultural Marriages are Against Indian Values

This myth overlooks India's historical tradition of cultural diversity and constitutional principles promoting equality, liberty, secularism, and freedom of choice. Contemporary Indian society increasingly recognizes intercultural marriages as expressions of democratic values and social integration.

1.5 Sociological Perspective of the Study

From a sociological perspective, myths surrounding cross-cultural marriages are products of socialization rather than objective reality. Structural Functionalism explains how traditional marriage norms maintain cultural continuity, whereas Conflict Theory emphasizes the role of caste, religion, and power relations in regulating marriage choices. Symbolic Interactionism suggests that meanings attached to cross-cultural marriages are created through everyday interactions, media narratives, and family discourse. The study therefore investigates how these myths are produced, maintained, and challenged within contemporary Indian society.

1.6 Need for the Present Study

Although numerous studies have examined inter-caste and inter-religious marriages, comparatively little research has systematically explored the myths surrounding cross-cultural marriages across multiple cultural dimensions. Existing literature primarily focuses on legal issues, family adjustment, or marital satisfaction, while misconceptions themselves remain underexplored. Understanding these myths is essential because they influence marriage decisions, family relationships, public opinion, and social acceptance. Empirical examination of these beliefs will help distinguish myths from realities and contribute to evidence-based discussions on marriage, culture, and social change.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The present study focuses on examining the prevalence, sources, and sociological implications of popular myths regarding cross-cultural marriages in India. It seeks to understand how these myths vary across gender, age, education, occupation, religion, caste, and locality and how they influence attitudes toward intercultural relationships. The findings are expected to contribute to sociology, family studies, gender studies, cultural studies, and public policy by providing empirical evidence regarding misconceptions associated with cross-cultural marriages in contemporary Indian society. This research also aims to promote informed dialogue, cultural sensitivity, and greater understanding of India's diverse social fabric.

II. Review of Literature

Cross-cultural marriages have increasingly attracted the attention of sociologists, anthropologists, and family researchers because they reflect changing social values, cultural diversity, and patterns of modernization. Early Indian sociologists such as G. S. Ghurye (1969) observed that caste and kinship have historically played a dominant role in regulating marriage in India, making marriages outside one's cultural group relatively uncommon. K. M. Kapadia (1966), in his work on marriage and family, emphasized that Indian marriages traditionally function as alliances between families rather than merely unions between individuals, thereby strengthening the persistence of cultural norms and endogamy. M. N. Srinivas (1966) argued that modernization, urbanization, and education gradually weaken rigid social barriers and encourage greater individual freedom in marital choice. Similarly, Patricia Uberoi (2006) highlighted that changing family structures, higher education, women's empowerment, and media exposure have expanded opportunities for intercultural interaction, resulting in increasing acceptance of marriages based on personal choice rather than caste or community alone. A. M. Shah (1998) emphasized that although family continues to play a central role in marriage decisions, contemporary Indian families increasingly negotiate between traditional values and individual aspirations. Tulsi Patel (2005) further observed that globalization and migration have transformed family relationships, leading to greater cultural interaction and changing perceptions regarding marriage. Studies conducted by André Béteille (1991) and S. C. Dube (1998) concluded that education functions as a powerful agent of social change by promoting tolerance,

equality, and acceptance of diversity. However, family honour, religious identity, caste consciousness, and community expectations continue to influence marital decisions. Despite substantial research on inter-caste and inter-religious marriages, relatively few empirical studies have specifically examined the myths surrounding cross-cultural marriages in India. Existing literature largely focuses on marriage patterns, family adjustment, or legal aspects, while misconceptions such as divorce, cultural loss, identity confusion, and social isolation remain inadequately explored. The present study attempts to bridge this gap by systematically examining popular myths associated with cross-cultural marriages and assessing their acceptance among respondents in Varanasi district.

III. Research Methodology

The present study entitled "**Exploring the Myths of Cross-Cultural Marriages in India**" adopted a **descriptive survey research design** to investigate the prevalence and acceptance of commonly held myths regarding cross-cultural marriages. The descriptive method was considered appropriate because it facilitates the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of respondents' beliefs and opinions regarding contemporary social issues. The study was conducted in **Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh**, a city that represents a unique blend of traditional cultural heritage and modern social transformation. The target population comprised adult residents of selected urban and rural localities of the district. A total of **50 respondents** were selected through the **simple random sampling technique**, ensuring equal opportunity for participation and minimizing selection bias. Primary data were collected using a **self-developed structured questionnaire** based on an extensive review of sociological literature and consultation with subject experts. The questionnaire consisted of statements relating to ten widely prevalent myths associated with cross-cultural marriages, including myths regarding divorce, family traditions, cultural identity, religious conflict, parental acceptance, social isolation, and marital adjustment. Respondents recorded their opinions on a **five-point Likert scale** ranging from **Strongly Agree (5)** to **Strongly Disagree (1)**. The questionnaire underwent expert evaluation to establish **content validity**, and necessary revisions were incorporated before final administration. A pilot test was conducted to examine clarity and reliability, and the instrument demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency using **Cronbach's Alpha**. The collected data were coded and analysed using **SPSS**. Descriptive statistical techniques such as **frequency, percentage, mean, and composite scores** were employed to summarize respondents' perceptions regarding each myth. Ethical principles were strictly followed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from every respondent, confidentiality of responses was maintained, and the information collected was used exclusively for academic purposes. The adopted methodology ensured scientific rigor, objectivity, and reliability, enabling meaningful sociological interpretation of the myths surrounding cross-cultural marriages in contemporary Indian society.

IV. Statistical Analysis and Interpretation

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Beliefs Regarding the Myth that "Cross-Cultural Marriages Always End in Divorce" among Residents of Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh (N = 50)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	4	8.0
Agree	9	18.0
Neutral	8	16.0
Disagree	17	34.0
Strongly Disagree	12	24.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4.1 presents respondents' opinions regarding one of the most common myths associated with cross-cultural marriages, namely that "**cross-cultural marriages always end in divorce.**" The findings reveal that only **4 respondents (8%) strongly agreed** and **9 respondents (18%) agreed** with this statement, indicating that **26%** of the respondents believed that intercultural marriages are inherently unstable. In contrast, **17 respondents (34%) disagreed**, while **12 respondents (24%) strongly disagreed**, together accounting for **58%** of the total respondents who rejected this myth. The remaining **8 respondents (16%)** maintained a neutral position, suggesting uncertainty or lack of sufficient personal experience regarding the issue. The results clearly indicate that a majority of respondents do not accept the widespread assumption that cross-cultural marriages inevitably lead to marital breakdown. This finding reflects changing social perceptions influenced by education, media exposure, urbanization, and increasing interaction among culturally diverse communities. Respondents appear to recognize that marital success depends primarily on interpersonal factors such as mutual trust, communication, emotional compatibility, respect, shared responsibilities, and conflict resolution rather than solely on cultural similarity.

From a sociological perspective, this myth has historically emerged from traditional beliefs that cultural differences inevitably produce conflict within families. Structural functionalist thinkers argued that shared cultural values contribute to family stability; however, contemporary sociological research increasingly demonstrates that successful marriages are determined more by the quality of interpersonal relationships than by identical cultural backgrounds. Modern family studies have shown that couples belonging to the same caste, religion, or community may also experience marital conflict, separation, or divorce due to personality differences, financial stress, domestic violence, poor communication, or incompatible expectations. The relatively small proportion of respondents supporting this myth may also indicate increasing public awareness regarding changing marriage patterns in India. Exposure to higher education, multicultural workplaces, social media, and constitutional values emphasizing equality and freedom of choice has encouraged many individuals to evaluate marriages on the basis of individual compatibility rather than inherited stereotypes. Nevertheless, the presence of approximately one-fourth of respondents who continue to believe this myth suggests that traditional perceptions remain influential among certain sections of society. The findings suggest that the myth linking cross-cultural marriages with inevitable divorce is gradually losing its influence in Varanasi district. The results indicate a positive shift toward evidence-based and rational understanding of marital relationships while highlighting the continued need for awareness programmes that challenge persistent social misconceptions surrounding intercultural marriages.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Beliefs Regarding the Myth that "Cross-Cultural Marriages Destroy Family Traditions and Cultural Heritage" among Residents of Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh (N = 50)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	10.0
Agree	10	20.0
Neutral	7	14.0
Disagree	18	36.0
Strongly Disagree	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4.2 examines respondents' beliefs regarding the commonly held myth that **"Cross-cultural marriages destroy family traditions and cultural heritage."** The findings indicate that **5 respondents (10%) strongly agreed** and **10 respondents (20%) agreed** with the statement, suggesting that **30%** of the respondents believed intercultural marriages threaten traditional customs and family values. On the other hand, **18 respondents (36%) disagreed** and **10 respondents (20%) strongly disagreed**, together constituting **56%** of the respondents who rejected this myth. The remaining **7 respondents (14%)** expressed neutral opinions, indicating uncertainty or conditional acceptance depending upon individual family circumstances. The findings demonstrate that the majority of respondents do not perceive cross-cultural marriages as a threat to Indian cultural traditions. Instead, many respondents appear to recognize that cultural heritage is dynamic and continuously evolves through interaction, adaptation, and exchange. Marriage between individuals belonging to different cultural backgrounds often creates opportunities for both families to learn, appreciate, and celebrate multiple traditions rather than abandoning them. Festivals, rituals, languages, cuisine, and customs from both cultures may coexist within the same household, resulting in cultural enrichment rather than cultural loss.

From a sociological perspective, this myth originates from the belief that cultural purity can only be preserved through endogamous marriages. Traditional Indian society has historically emphasized marriage within one's caste, religion, or community to ensure continuity of customs and kinship structures. However, sociological theories of modernization and cultural pluralism argue that societies naturally evolve through interaction between diverse groups. Cultural exchange has been one of the defining characteristics of Indian civilization throughout history, contributing to its richness and diversity. The findings also reflect the influence of globalization, education, urbanization, and digital communication, which have increased public exposure to multicultural environments. Respondents increasingly understand that traditions are preserved not merely through marriage patterns but through conscious practice, family participation, and intergenerational transmission. Even within cross-cultural families, parents often ensure that children are familiar with both cultural backgrounds, thereby strengthening rather than weakening cultural awareness. However, the 30% of respondents supporting this myth indicate that concerns regarding cultural preservation continue to exist, particularly among individuals who view marriage primarily as a mechanism for maintaining community identity and family honour. These perceptions demonstrate that traditional beliefs continue to influence public opinion despite ongoing social transformation. The findings suggest that while concerns about cultural preservation remain present, a majority of respondents believe that cross-cultural marriages contribute to cultural exchange and mutual understanding rather than the destruction of family traditions.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Beliefs Regarding the Myth that "Children Born in Cross-Cultural Marriages Experience Identity Confusion" among Residents of Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh (N = 50)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	3	6.0
Agree	9	18.0
Neutral	10	20.0
Disagree	17	34.0
Strongly Disagree	11	22.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4.3 presents respondents' opinions regarding the widespread belief that **"Children born in cross-cultural marriages experience identity confusion."** The results reveal that **3 respondents (6%) strongly agreed** and **9 respondents (18%) agreed** with the statement, indicating that only **24%** of the respondents believed children from intercultural families face identity-related difficulties. Conversely, **17 respondents (34%) disagreed** and **11 respondents (22%) strongly disagreed**, together accounting for **56%** of respondents who rejected this misconception. A further **10 respondents (20%)** remained neutral, reflecting uncertainty regarding the long-term effects of multicultural upbringing. The findings indicate that most respondents believe children raised in cross-cultural families are capable of developing healthy personal and cultural identities. Rather than experiencing confusion, such children often gain exposure to multiple languages, customs, religious practices, and social traditions. This multicultural environment can foster greater adaptability, tolerance, intercultural competence, and broader worldviews. Many respondents appear to recognize that identity formation depends more on parental guidance, emotional security, education, and family relationships than on cultural similarity between parents.

From a sociological perspective, identity is a socially constructed phenomenon that evolves through interaction with family, educational institutions, peer groups, and the wider society. Contemporary theories of multiculturalism emphasize that individuals are capable of maintaining multiple cultural identities simultaneously without experiencing psychological conflict. In an increasingly globalized world, multicultural identities are becoming more common and socially accepted. Nevertheless, nearly one-fourth of respondents continued to believe this myth. Their concerns may arise from uncertainties regarding religious upbringing, language preference, cultural practices, or community acceptance. Such perceptions are largely influenced by traditional notions of singular cultural identity and limited exposure to multicultural family structures. The findings suggest that respondents increasingly perceive multicultural parenting as an opportunity rather than a disadvantage. The rejection of this myth reflects growing awareness that cultural diversity within families can strengthen children's social competence, tolerance, and appreciation of India's pluralistic heritage.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Beliefs Regarding the Myth that "Religious Differences Inevitably Lead to Marital Conflict in Cross-Cultural Marriages" among Residents of Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh (N = 50)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	6	12.0
Agree	11	22.0
Neutral	7	14.0
Disagree	16	32.0
Strongly Disagree	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4.4 examines respondents' perceptions regarding the myth that **"Religious differences inevitably lead to marital conflict in cross-cultural marriages."** The findings indicate that **6 respondents (12%) strongly agreed** and **11 respondents (22%) agreed**, meaning **34%** believed that religious diversity within marriage naturally results in conflict. Conversely, **16 respondents (32%) disagreed** and **10 respondents (20%) strongly disagreed**, together accounting for **52%** of respondents who rejected this myth. Additionally, **7 respondents (14%)** remained neutral. The findings suggest that a majority of respondents no longer believe that religious diversity automatically results in unsuccessful marriages. Many respondents appear to understand that marital harmony depends primarily on mutual respect, effective communication, emotional maturity, and willingness to accommodate each other's beliefs rather than on religious similarity alone. Couples from different religious backgrounds can successfully negotiate rituals, festivals, dietary practices, and child-rearing responsibilities through dialogue and mutual understanding.

From a sociological perspective, religion has historically served as an important institution regulating marriage, social identity, and family life. Consequently, religious differences have often been viewed as potential sources of conflict. However, increasing secularization, constitutional protection of religious freedom, educational advancement, and urban multiculturalism have encouraged more inclusive attitudes toward interfaith

relationships. Younger generations increasingly distinguish between personal faith and interpersonal compatibility, recognizing that shared values such as trust, respect, and cooperation contribute more significantly to marital stability than identical religious affiliation. The respondents who accepted this myth may reflect continuing concerns regarding family acceptance, religious rituals, inheritance practices, conversion, and community pressure. These apprehensions demonstrate that religion remains a significant cultural institution in Indian society even as attitudes evolve. The findings indicate that while religious differences continue to generate concern among some respondents, the majority recognize that successful marriages depend on mutual understanding rather than religious homogeneity. This reflects the gradual emergence of more pluralistic and inclusive attitudes toward cross-cultural marriages.

Table 4.5: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Beliefs Regarding the Myth that "Cross-Cultural Marriages are Socially Unacceptable in Indian Society" among Residents of Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh (N = 50)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	4	8.0
Agree	10	20.0
Neutral	8	16.0
Disagree	18	36.0
Strongly Disagree	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4.5 presents respondents' perceptions regarding the myth that **"Cross-cultural marriages are socially unacceptable in Indian society."** The data indicate that **4 respondents (8%) strongly agreed** and **10 respondents (20%) agreed** with the statement, suggesting that **28%** of the respondents believed intercultural marriages continue to be socially unacceptable. In contrast, **18 respondents (36%) disagreed**, while **10 respondents (20%) strongly disagreed**, together accounting for **56%** of the respondents who rejected this belief. Additionally, **8 respondents (16%)** expressed neutral opinions, indicating that they perceived acceptance to vary according to social circumstances. The findings reveal that a majority of respondents perceive Indian society as becoming increasingly accepting of cross-cultural marriages. This transformation may be attributed to rising educational attainment, urbanization, migration, technological advancement, and widespread access to digital media. Young adults increasingly interact with people from diverse religious, linguistic, regional, and caste backgrounds through universities, workplaces, and online platforms. Such interactions promote intercultural understanding and reduce social distance, thereby improving acceptance of marriages based on mutual choice rather than traditional boundaries.

From a sociological perspective, Indian society is presently experiencing a transition from traditional collectivism towards greater individual autonomy. Marriage is gradually evolving from an institution primarily regulated by caste, religion, and family authority into one that increasingly recognizes personal compatibility and constitutional freedoms. Although social acceptance remains uneven across regions and communities, especially in rural and conservative settings, changing social values have contributed to greater openness toward intercultural unions. The respondents who accepted this myth may have based their perceptions on continuing instances of family opposition, honour-based discrimination, community resistance, or negative media reports. Such experiences reinforce the belief that cross-cultural marriages remain socially controversial. However, the larger proportion rejecting the myth indicates growing confidence in the gradual modernization of Indian society. The findings demonstrate that while complete acceptance has not yet been achieved, respondents largely believe that cross-cultural marriages are becoming increasingly acceptable within contemporary Indian society. The results reflect an ongoing process of social change in which traditional resistance is gradually being replaced by greater cultural tolerance.

Table 4.6: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Beliefs Regarding the Myth that "Parents Never Accept Cross-Cultural Marriages" among Residents of Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh (N = 50)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	7	14.0
Agree	12	24.0
Neutral	6	12.0
Disagree	16	32.0
Strongly Disagree	9	18.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4.6 illustrates respondents' opinions regarding the myth that **"Parents never accept cross-cultural marriages."** The findings reveal that **7 respondents (14%) strongly agreed** and **12 respondents (24%) agreed**, indicating that **38%** believed parents generally oppose intercultural marriages. In comparison, **16 respondents (32%) disagreed** and **9 respondents (18%) strongly disagreed**, together constituting **50%** of the respondents

who rejected this myth. The remaining **6 respondents (12%)** maintained neutral opinions. The findings suggest that respondents increasingly recognize that parental attitudes toward cross-cultural marriages are changing. While parental approval remains an important aspect of marriage in Indian society, many families are becoming more accepting when prospective partners possess good educational qualifications, stable employment, compatible personalities, and respectable family backgrounds. Respondents appear to acknowledge that parents today often evaluate marriages on practical considerations rather than exclusively on caste, religion, or regional identity.

From a sociological perspective, the family continues to function as one of the most influential institutions regulating marriage. Traditional Indian families have historically emphasized parental authority in selecting life partners to preserve kinship networks, social status, and cultural continuity. However, modernization, women's education, economic independence, urban living, and greater exposure to constitutional values have gradually transformed parent-child relationships. Increasingly, many parents participate in discussions rather than exercising absolute authority over marital decisions. Nevertheless, the sizeable proportion of respondents accepting the myth indicates that parental resistance remains a significant social reality in several communities. Concerns regarding family honour, religious customs, inheritance patterns, social prestige, and community acceptance continue to influence parental decision-making. These findings demonstrate that parental acceptance varies considerably according to educational background, social class, locality, and cultural environment. The results indicate that although parental opposition continues to exist, the belief that parents **never** accept cross-cultural marriages is largely rejected by respondents. The findings reflect a gradual shift towards greater flexibility and dialogue within Indian families while recognizing that traditional concerns remain influential.

Table 4.7: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Beliefs Regarding the Myth that "Cross-Cultural Marriages Weaken Indian Culture and Traditional Values" among Residents of Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh (N = 50)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	10.0
Agree	9	18.0
Neutral	7	14.0
Disagree	18	36.0
Strongly Disagree	11	22.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4.7 examines respondents' beliefs regarding the myth that **"Cross-cultural marriages weaken Indian culture and traditional values."** The findings indicate that **5 respondents (10%) strongly agreed** and **9 respondents (18%) agreed**, together representing **28%** of the respondents who believed that intercultural marriages negatively affect Indian cultural traditions. Conversely, **18 respondents (36%) disagreed** and **11 respondents (22%) strongly disagreed**, together accounting for **58%** of respondents who rejected this myth. The remaining **7 respondents (14%)** expressed neutral opinions. The findings demonstrate that most respondents do not perceive cross-cultural marriages as a threat to Indian culture. Instead, they appear to recognize that Indian civilization has historically evolved through interaction among diverse religious, linguistic, regional, and ethnic communities. Cultural diversity has long been a defining feature of Indian society, and intercultural marriages can contribute to mutual understanding, social integration, and appreciation of different traditions. Rather than weakening cultural identity, such marriages often promote cultural exchange by enabling families to celebrate multiple customs, festivals, languages, and traditions within the same household.

From a sociological perspective, culture is not static but dynamic. It continuously changes through processes of interaction, adaptation, innovation, and diffusion. Modernization theory suggests that social institutions evolve in response to changing economic, educational, and technological conditions. Consequently, preserving culture does not require complete social isolation or strict endogamy. Instead, cultural continuity depends upon active participation, transmission of values, and respect for traditions across generations. The respondents supporting this myth may continue to associate cultural preservation with marriage within one's own community. Their concerns may arise from fears regarding loss of language, religious rituals, family customs, and community identity. Such perceptions reflect the continuing influence of traditional socialization and collective identity in Indian society. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents view cross-cultural marriages as opportunities for cultural enrichment rather than cultural decline. The results suggest that increasing education, intercultural interaction, and constitutional values are encouraging more inclusive understandings of Indian culture and national identity.

Table 4.8: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Beliefs Regarding the Myth that "People Belonging to Different Cultural Backgrounds Cannot Successfully Adjust After Marriage" among Residents of Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh (N = 50)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	4	8.0
Agree	10	20.0
Neutral	9	18.0
Disagree	17	34.0
Strongly Disagree	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4.8 presents respondents' opinions regarding the myth that **"People belonging to different cultural backgrounds cannot successfully adjust after marriage."** The findings indicate that **4 respondents (8%) strongly agreed** and **10 respondents (20%) agreed**, showing that **28%** of the respondents believed cultural differences make marital adjustment difficult. In contrast, **17 respondents (34%) disagreed** and **10 respondents (20%) strongly disagreed**, together representing **54%** of the respondents who rejected this myth. The remaining **9 respondents (18%)** adopted a neutral position, indicating that they believed adjustment depends on individual circumstances rather than cultural background alone. The findings suggest that the majority of respondents do not consider cultural diversity to be an insurmountable obstacle in married life. Instead, respondents appear to recognize that successful marital adjustment depends on qualities such as effective communication, emotional maturity, trust, mutual respect, patience, and willingness to accommodate differences. Every marriage, irrespective of cultural background, requires compromise and cooperation. Therefore, cultural similarity alone cannot guarantee marital harmony, nor does cultural diversity necessarily result in conflict.

From a sociological perspective, marital adjustment is a continuous process of negotiation between two individuals rather than merely an outcome of shared traditions. Symbolic Interaction Theory explains that couples create shared meanings and family practices through daily interaction. Cross-cultural couples often develop new traditions by integrating elements of both cultures, thereby strengthening interpersonal relationships rather than weakening them. Contemporary family sociology also emphasizes that adaptation is influenced by education, personality, economic stability, family support, and communication skills more than by cultural homogeneity. The respondents who supported this myth may have been influenced by traditional assumptions that differences in language, food habits, religious rituals, customs, and social expectations inevitably create misunderstandings. Such beliefs often arise from limited personal interaction with intercultural families and reliance on stereotypes rather than lived experience. The findings indicate that respondents increasingly understand marital adjustment as a product of interpersonal compatibility rather than cultural similarity. The results reflect growing acceptance of cultural diversity within marital relationships and recognition that mutual understanding is the foundation of successful family life.

Table 4.9: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Beliefs Regarding the Myth that "Cross-Cultural Couples Face Permanent Social Isolation after Marriage" among Residents of Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh (N = 50)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	3	6.0
Agree	9	18.0
Neutral	10	20.0
Disagree	18	36.0
Strongly Disagree	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4.9 examines respondents' beliefs regarding the myth that **"Cross-cultural couples face permanent social isolation after marriage."** The findings reveal that **3 respondents (6%) strongly agreed** and **9 respondents (18%) agreed**, indicating that only **24%** believed intercultural couples remain socially isolated throughout their married life. Conversely, **18 respondents (36%) disagreed** and **10 respondents (20%) strongly disagreed**, together accounting for **56%** of respondents who rejected this myth. The remaining **10 respondents (20%)** remained neutral. The findings demonstrate that most respondents believe social isolation experienced by cross-cultural couples is generally temporary rather than permanent. While families or communities may initially oppose intercultural marriages, many respondents acknowledged that acceptance often increases over time as couples establish stable family relationships, demonstrate mutual commitment, and gain social recognition. Education, employment, financial independence, and successful family adjustment frequently contribute to improving relationships with relatives and society.

From a sociological perspective, social acceptance is a dynamic process influenced by changing norms and repeated interaction. According to the theory of social integration, interpersonal contact gradually reduces prejudice and strengthens mutual trust between individuals and groups. Modern communication, urban lifestyles,

and multicultural workplaces further encourage inclusive attitudes by increasing everyday interaction among culturally diverse populations. Consequently, social boundaries that once appeared rigid are becoming increasingly flexible. However, the respondents supporting this myth indicate that social discrimination and community resistance continue to exist in certain social settings. Honour concerns, caste identity, religious differences, and traditional community expectations may initially isolate couples who choose partners outside accepted cultural boundaries. Nevertheless, these challenges often diminish with time, particularly when families witness stable and successful marriages. The findings suggest that respondents increasingly reject the belief that cross-cultural couples remain permanently excluded from society. Instead, they recognize that social acceptance develops gradually through continued interaction, family reconciliation, and changing societal values.

Table 4.10 : Distribution of Respondents According to Their Beliefs Regarding the Myth that "Marriage Within the Same Culture Always Leads to a Successful Married Life" among Residents of Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh (N = 50)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	4	8.0
Agree	11	22.0
Neutral	8	16.0
Disagree	17	34.0
Strongly Disagree	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4.10 presents respondents' opinions regarding the myth that "Marriage within the same culture always leads to a successful married life." The findings indicate that **4 respondents (8%) strongly agreed** and **11 respondents (22%) agreed**, meaning **30%** of respondents believed cultural similarity guarantees marital success. In contrast, **17 respondents (34%) disagreed** and **10 respondents (20%) strongly disagreed**, together accounting for **54%** of respondents who rejected this belief. The remaining **8 respondents (16%)** remained neutral. The findings clearly indicate that a majority of respondents recognize that marital success cannot be determined solely by shared cultural background. While cultural similarity may reduce certain practical differences relating to customs, language, or family traditions, respondents generally believe that successful marriages depend upon mutual understanding, trust, emotional compatibility, communication, respect, financial cooperation, and shared life goals. These interpersonal factors are increasingly viewed as more important than caste, religion, or regional identity.

From a sociological perspective, traditional Indian society has long emphasized endogamous marriages based on the assumption that common cultural values ensure family stability. However, contemporary sociological research demonstrates that marriages within the same cultural community also experience conflict, separation, and divorce due to incompatibility, economic stress, domestic violence, unrealistic expectations, and communication problems. Therefore, cultural similarity alone cannot guarantee marital satisfaction. The respondents rejecting this myth appear to adopt a more rational and experience-based understanding of marriage. Their responses reflect the influence of education, modernization, constitutional values, and exposure to diverse social environments. Increasingly, individuals evaluate marriage in terms of emotional compatibility and mutual respect rather than exclusively through traditional cultural criteria. The findings suggest that respondents are moving beyond simplistic assumptions regarding marital success. The results indicate growing recognition that healthy relationships are built upon interpersonal qualities rather than merely on shared cultural identity.

Table 4.11: Composite Distribution of Respondents According to the Overall Level of Acceptance of Myths Related to Cross-Cultural Marriages among Residents of Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh (N = 50)

Composite scores were calculated by combining responses to all ten myth statements included in the structured questionnaire. Based on the cumulative scores, respondents were classified into three categories representing high, moderate, and low acceptance of myths regarding cross-cultural marriages.

Level of Myth Acceptance	Frequency	Percentage
High Acceptance of Myths	9	18.0
Moderate Acceptance of Myths	16	32.0
Low Acceptance of Myths	25	50.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Computed from Composite Scores of the Structured Questionnaire, Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4.11 presents the overall composite level of acceptance of myths concerning cross-cultural marriages among the respondents. The composite score was prepared by combining responses to ten commonly prevailing myths examined in the present study. Based on the cumulative score, respondents were classified into three levels, namely **high acceptance**, **moderate acceptance**, and **low acceptance** of myths. The findings reveal that **25 respondents (50%) demonstrated low acceptance of myths**, indicating that half of the respondents rejected most of the misconceptions surrounding cross-cultural marriages. These respondents generally believed

that marital success depends upon communication, compatibility, mutual respect, education, and emotional understanding rather than caste, religion, language, or regional identity. They also rejected stereotypes relating to divorce, family disintegration, identity confusion among children, and permanent social rejection. Further, **16 respondents (32%)** exhibited a **moderate level of myth acceptance**. This group neither completely accepted nor completely rejected the prevailing myths. Their responses suggest that although they support intercultural marriages in principle, they continue to express certain concerns regarding parental approval, religious practices, family traditions, or community acceptance. Such respondents represent a transitional social group influenced simultaneously by traditional cultural values and modern democratic ideals. Only **9 respondents (18%)** demonstrated a **high level of myth acceptance**, indicating that a comparatively small proportion continued to believe that cross-cultural marriages negatively affect family stability, cultural continuity, religious harmony, and social acceptance. These respondents largely reflected traditional perceptions that emphasize endogamy and community-based marriage practices.

From a sociological perspective, the findings illustrate the gradual transformation of Indian society from rigid traditional marriage norms toward greater acceptance of cultural diversity. The predominance of respondents with low myth acceptance suggests that modernization, education, urbanization, migration, digital communication, and constitutional awareness have significantly challenged long-standing stereotypes surrounding intercultural marriages. Respondents increasingly evaluate marriage through rational and individual-centred perspectives rather than inherited social prejudices. Nevertheless, the presence of moderate and high myth acceptance indicates that traditional social institutions such as family, religion, caste, and community continue to influence public opinion. Cultural beliefs transmitted through socialization remain deeply embedded in many households, particularly regarding marriage and family life. Consequently, attitudes toward cross-cultural marriages continue to reflect the coexistence of traditional and modern value systems. The findings suggest that myths surrounding cross-cultural marriages are gradually losing their influence among the respondents. However, sustained public education, intercultural dialogue, family counselling, and awareness programmes remain essential for further reducing misconceptions and promoting greater social acceptance of cultural diversity in marriage.

Table 4.12: Overall Sociological Assessment of Respondents' Perceptions Regarding the Prevalence of Myths Surrounding Cross-Cultural Marriages in Contemporary Indian Society among Residents of Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh (N = 50)

Overall Sociological Assessment	Frequency	Percentage
Majority of Myths Rejected	28	56.0
Mixed Perceptions (Partially Accepted)	15	30.0
Majority of Myths Accepted	7	14.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Computed from Overall Responses to the Myth Assessment Scale, Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4.12 presents the overall sociological assessment of respondents' perceptions regarding the prevalence of myths surrounding cross-cultural marriages in contemporary Indian society. The assessment represents the cumulative interpretation of respondents' opinions across all myth-related statements included in the study. The findings reveal that **28 respondents (56%)** rejected the majority of the myths examined in the study. These respondents demonstrated progressive attitudes by recognizing that cross-cultural marriages do not inherently result in divorce, cultural decline, family disintegration, identity confusion among children, or permanent social isolation. Instead, they emphasized that successful marriages depend upon interpersonal understanding, emotional compatibility, effective communication, equality, and mutual respect rather than cultural similarity. This finding indicates that respondents increasingly distinguish between traditional stereotypes and contemporary social realities. Furthermore, **15 respondents (30%)** exhibited **mixed perceptions**, suggesting that while they rejected several myths, they continued to express reservations regarding certain issues such as parental acceptance, religious differences, or preservation of family traditions. Their responses indicate that modernization has influenced their thinking, yet traditional cultural values continue to shape some aspects of their beliefs. This category represents the transitional character of contemporary Indian society, where modern ideals coexist with inherited social norms. Only **7 respondents (14%)** accepted the majority of the myths regarding cross-cultural marriages. These respondents largely viewed intercultural marriages through traditional perspectives emphasizing caste endogamy, religious homogeneity, and community-based marriage practices. Their responses suggest continued concern regarding cultural preservation, family honour, and social approval.

From a sociological perspective, the findings provide strong evidence of ongoing social change. Processes such as modernization, urbanization, educational expansion, constitutional awareness, migration, occupational mobility, and digital communication have gradually weakened rigid cultural stereotypes. Increased interaction among diverse social groups has reduced prejudice and encouraged acceptance of cultural diversity within marital relationships. These findings support theories of modernization, social integration, and cultural pluralism, which argue that societies become increasingly inclusive as social interaction expands. However, the

persistence of mixed perceptions and myth acceptance among a section of respondents demonstrates that social transformation remains incomplete. Family socialization, religious teachings, community traditions, and cultural expectations continue to influence marriage-related beliefs. Therefore, changing public attitudes requires continuous educational efforts, intercultural engagement, and dissemination of accurate information regarding cross-cultural marriages. The findings suggest that Varanasi society is gradually moving toward greater acceptance of intercultural marriages while retaining certain traditional concerns. The majority of respondents appear willing to evaluate marriage based on compatibility and shared values rather than inherited cultural stereotypes, reflecting the evolving nature of Indian society.

V. Conclusion

The present study explored the prevailing myths surrounding cross-cultural marriages in India by examining the perceptions of respondents from Varanasi district, Uttar Pradesh. The findings demonstrate that Indian society is gradually moving towards greater acceptance of intercultural marriages, although several traditional misconceptions continue to persist among a section of the population. Marriage remains an important social institution influenced by family values, religion, caste, customs, and community expectations. However, rapid social transformation has significantly altered public perceptions regarding partner selection and cultural diversity. The statistical analysis revealed that most respondents rejected the commonly held myths that cross-cultural marriages always end in divorce, destroy family traditions, create identity confusion among children, inevitably lead to religious conflict, weaken Indian culture, or result in permanent social isolation. Similarly, respondents recognized that marital success depends more upon mutual respect, communication, emotional compatibility, trust, and adaptability than upon cultural similarity alone. These findings indicate increasing awareness that many traditional beliefs regarding cross-cultural marriages are based on social stereotypes rather than empirical realities. The study also revealed that although many respondents rejected these myths, some concerns continue to exist regarding parental approval, preservation of cultural traditions, and community acceptance. Such findings suggest that Indian society is presently experiencing a transitional phase where traditional values coexist with modern ideals of equality, secularism, and individual freedom. Family continues to influence marriage decisions, but its role is gradually changing from absolute control to negotiation and mutual understanding.

Varanasi, despite its strong cultural and religious heritage, reflects this broader pattern of social transformation. Educational institutions, migration, tourism, digital communication, and occupational mobility have increased intercultural interaction and contributed to more positive attitudes towards cross-cultural marriages. These changes demonstrate that cultural diversity is increasingly perceived as a source of social enrichment rather than social conflict. From a sociological perspective, the findings support theories of modernization, social integration, and cultural pluralism, which emphasize that societies evolve through interaction among diverse groups. The study therefore concludes that myths surrounding cross-cultural marriages are gradually losing their influence, particularly among individuals exposed to education and multicultural environments. Nevertheless, continuous public awareness programmes, family counselling, educational initiatives, and community dialogue remain essential for reducing misconceptions and promoting harmonious intercultural relationships. The study contributes to the literature on sociology of marriage by highlighting the gap between traditional myths and contemporary realities. It further provides useful implications for educators, policymakers, social workers, and researchers working in the fields of family studies, gender studies, cultural studies, and social integration.

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